

Lasallian Professional Development

Monthly PD for the New Zealand Lasallian Family of schools - WE ARE ONE LASALLE!
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this issue

21st Century Strategies to help you grasp the idea of GRAVITY and how this applies today in your own classes.

The origins of the 12 Virtues...

In 1785, just before the French Revolution, Brother Agathon, who was the fifth Superior General of the De La Salle Brothers, wrote a document called 'The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher'. The list of virtues is like sage advice that a teacher might receive from an experienced Year Level Dean or similar.

The 12 Virtues combines two important pieces of work of St. John Baptist De La Salle's. The spiritual vision of his Meditations and the practical pedagogy of his Conduct of Christian Schools.

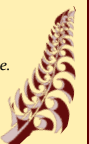
The 12 Virtues help answer the fundamental question for teachers in Lasallian schools: *"If I am to touch the hearts of my students and teach them in the best possible way, what practices should I follow and what vision should I have for them?"*

Br Agathon reminds the teacher - if you have a problem in your class, look to your own behaviour first.

12 Virtues and 12 months of 2013. Each month, I aim to provide you with useful, modern strategies, that will allow you to bring De La Salle's ideas right into your own classrooms. I kindly acknowledge Br. Jeffery Calligan for his work on this material and real insight. Enjoy learning about gravity!

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The 12 Virtues of a Good Teacher - Gravity

Gravity (Seriousness)

Teachers earn respect by acting with dignity. They cultivate an assured and calming presence.

Do you have the GRAVITY that John shows below?

Gravity



This is the virtue that Agathon and De La Salle left out.
John is funny. He has a great sense of humour and his students laugh often in his classes. They feel relaxed enough to work hard. When there is a problem or a difficulty, he can defuse the situation with a smile or a joke. John has a good sense of proportion and knows that boys in particular like a teacher who can make lessons fun, as well as hard work.

GRAVITY

(Seriousness)

A virtue that regulates the exterior of a teacher conformably to modesty, politeness and good order.



Strategy 3-4: Efficient Classroom Structures

Purpose: To develop efficient routines for student learning.

Description: Settling on a few classroom routines that maximize learning and ease teaching.



Some lesson plans work so well that they can be profitably turned into regular classroom routines. Once students learn these routines, the classroom develops a structure that is familiar to students, and that often eases our teaching chores and maximizes student learning. As examples, below are three structures for a day's learning experiences that teachers have found particularly efficient.

Structure 1: Highlighting Independent Work time

The first structure is especially noteworthy because it provides time for students to learn independently both before and after the new lesson of the day. This structure uses eight elements. A discussion of each element follows the classroom example.

A Classroom Example:

1. *Immediate work assignment.* Students know that as soon as they enter the classroom they are to begin work on the posted *DO NOW* task (Strategy 6-1)¹ Today's *DO NOW* includes a quote. Students are to write a reaction to it in their personal journals. While students are doing this, the teacher can take attendance and attend to other housekeeping chores.

2. *Independent homework review.* After finishing their *DO NOW* task, students know they are then to form pairs. With their partner they compare answers to yesterday's homework, using a strategy called Homework Sharing Pairs (Strategy 10-1)²

3. *Independent tasks:* As students finish their homework review they work with individually created sets of Study Cards (Strategy 6-3)³

¹ Strategy 6-1: *DO NOW* **Purpose:** To engage students productively as soon as they enter the room. **Description:** Providing independent work for students to handle as soon as they arrive. -- Rather than delaying teaching until all students have arrived and we are ready to teach, we can establish a standing instruction that informs students they are to handle an announced task as soon as they enter the room. Some possibilities include asking students to: (1) Write thoughts about a posted quote or question of the day; (2) Solve a problem on the board or overhead and then create a new problem in the same style; (3) Draw something to illustrate a math concept or a line from a poem or an idea from social studies; (3) Time themselves and in one minute see how many ways they can produce a sum of 25, write words that rhyme with "slay," list states or rivers, or perform an such task; (4) Write a personal self-management goal for the day. The idea is o create a brief initial task so students waste no time and lose no energy waiting for activities to get underway. It also gives us time to prepare lesson materials, take attendance or consult with individual students. What do students do after finishing the *DO NOW* task? It is helpful to have a catch-all activity available. If students have homework to be checked, they might proceed to a homework review or move on to other independent task. It is often useful to begin class by randomly sampling one or two of the students' *DO NOW* responses. That can add a bit of fun and intrigue to the activity as students wonder, "Will I be called on today?"

² Strategy 10-1 Homework Sharing Pairs **Purpose:** To maximize academic learning and advance self-responsibility. **Description:** We could simply ask students to pair up in class and compare their homework. If the homework involved right/wrong answers, those could be posted or read aloud at the outset. We might tell students they are to teach each other when one person in the pair understands more than the other, and when both are unsure, they are to ask another pair for help. We might also tell students that if they finish and time still remains, they are to create new questions for each other or to review past content in some appropriate way.

³ Strategy 6-3: Study Cards **Purpose:** To help students commit basic information to memory and to develop student study skills. **Description:** Asking students to create and study a set of cards containing material to be memorized. Students often need to memorize math facts, spelling words, scientific information, definitions of key terms, and the like. Study cards have proven to be valuable for this task. (1) *Creating cards:* Students create a set of cards for themselves in class or as homework perhaps using three-by-five cards, with each card having one item to be memorized. The front of a card might have a vocabulary word. for example, the back might contain a sample sentence and a definition and, if the student choses, a picture. Students might also decorate their cards. (2) *Categorizing cards.* Students then separate their *cards* into two categories, those with information they already now and those needing some attention. Students might store cards in two separate envelopes, perhaps marked "Know" and "Not yet". (3) *Studying cards.* Students then study on their own. Perhaps brainstorm with the class different times and way students might study the cards -- first thing in the morning, before going to sleep, drilling with a partner, and so on. And perhaps provide a few minutes in class for students to study cards in any way the choose. Instruct students to move cards from the "Not yet" envelop to the "Know" envelope whenever they feel confident to do so. (4) *Checking progress.* Regularly assess student progress, perhaps by having students meet weekly in pairs to test each other on the cards in their "know" envelopes, with a note signed by their partners verifying that the enclosed items were mastered. (5) *Appreciating progress.* To help students monitor their progress and appreciate their success, consider asking them to keep a private chart of how many cards they mastered each week. You might also offer special recognition when students show they mastered a certain number of items in a certain time period, with each student's threshold set individually, so the challenge is fair for all (To define the challenge, after they are familiar with the process, ask students to identify how many cards they learned each week for three weeks. Average those three numbers and that number becomes each student's "base" rate. The challenge is to meet or beat the base rate each week thereafter.) The Study Card strategy is highly flexible and self-managing. It allows each student to pursue independent learning geared to individual pace and style. Students who learn quickly are not bored or held back, and those requiring more time need not feel either pressured or inadequate.

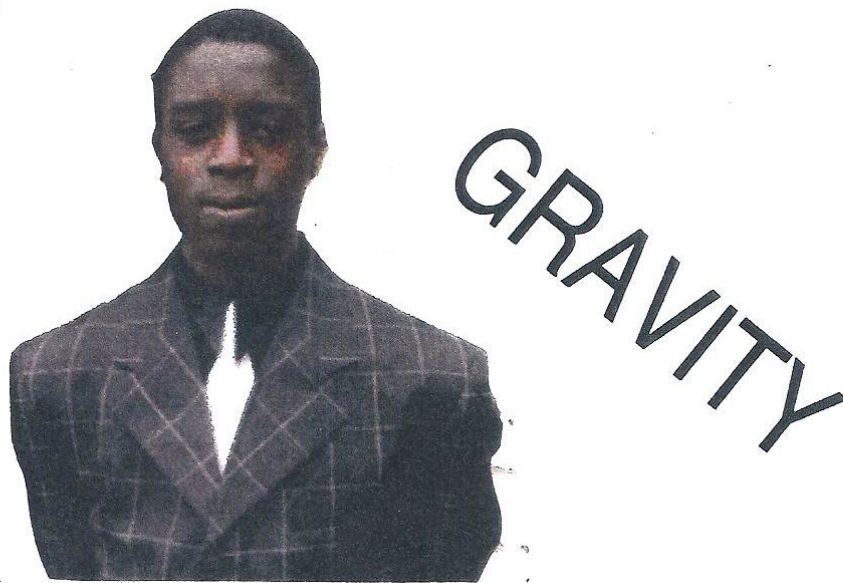
1. **Attention Getting.** The teacher uses a nonverbal Hand-Raising Signal to call the class together. When the class is fully attentive, the teacher asks for two volunteers to read what they wrote in response to the day's quote, using Set of Speakers (Strategy 16-5)⁴. *About 2 minutes.*

2. **Quick Review.** The teacher asks five quick questions that review prior material. For each question students write a response, which the teacher puts on the board while the students were writing. (Review Test, Strategy 11-1).⁵ *About 5 minutes.*

3. **Daily lesson.** The teacher then introduces the new material of the day, which today involves a lecture-discussion. At the end of the lesson, the teacher asks students to write what they learned in the form of Outcome Sentences. *About 15 minutes.*

4. **Independent tasks.** When students finish writing, they return to independent tasks. Most continuing with their Study Cards, although some choose another task from a posted list of options (which includes work at a learning center and independent reading) *About 5 minutes.*

5. **Wrap-up.** The teacher announces the day's homework assignment and then has a few students report one of their Outcome Sentences, using Whip Around, Pass Option (Strategy 16-4). *About 3 minutes.*



⁴ Strategy 16-5 Set of Speakers **Purpose:** To select speakers efficiently. **Description:** Requesting volunteers to speak and, then, from all volunteers, choosing a set that will take turns speaking. Rather than calling on one student at a time during the discussions, we can occasionally select a set of students to speak. "How many would be willing to share ideas?" we might ask. As hands go up, we point to some students; "Let's hear from five people today. You be first, You be second." And we continue until we have identified a set of five. We then ask the first person to speak. All students then tend to relax and pay attention. The speakers know their turns are coming up, and they know the order in which they will speak. The rest of the class knows the next bit of time is organized and they need not worry about whether or not to volunteer. Set of Speakers makes it easier to avoid calling repeatedly on the same students and to notice the more tentative hand-raising students who are almost ready to respond. We can often prompt more volunteers by saying something like, How about some volunteers from those who have not spoken lately?" Or "Simpson, I see you might be willing to be one of the speakers. Are you?" It is easier for the reserved student to volunteer to be part of a set of speakers than to be a solo speaker.

⁵ Strategy 11-1: Review Test. **Purpose:** To keep all students involved in reviewing subject matter with many experiences of success. **Description:** Posting a set of review questions and having students (1) write answers and (2) immediately check their work against the provided correct answer. The Review Test covers material previously introduced in class. The "test" is for the students alone. Their challenge. To answer as many correctly as they can.